



**STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
OFFICE OF RECOVERY & PLANNING SERVICES  
CORDELL HULL BUILDING, THIRD FLOOR  
425 5<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE NORTH  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243**

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**1) What is a Certified Peer Specialist?**

A Certified Peer Specialist is a person who has self-identified as having received or is receiving mental health or co-occurring disorder services in his or her personal recovery process. This individual has undergone training recognized by the Office of Recovery & Planning Services on how to assist others in regaining control over their own lives based on the principles of recovery and resiliency.

**2) Why are direct “peer-to-peer” services important?**

Peer-to-peer service is a vehicle that can be used to assist other individuals diagnosed with mental illness or co-occurring disorders (COD) to combat societal stigma, negative self-images or self-stigma by providing support, advocating for change and offering positive images of peers to non-peers. By providing positive images of persons diagnosed with mental illness or co-occurring disorders (COD), Peer Specialists can also have a positive impact on the negative attitudes sometimes found among mental health service providers.

**3) What is the purpose of Tennessee’s Peer Specialist Certification Program?**

State certification as a Peer Specialist is intended to ensure that individuals who provide direct peer-to-peer support services meet acceptable minimum standards.

**4) Who oversees Tennessee’s Peer Support Specialist Certification Program?**

The Office of Recovery & Planning Services shall develop policies and procedures within the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities guidelines to grant certification and to ensure that acceptable professional minimum standards are established.

**5) Where can a Certified Peer Specialist work?**

Programs in which Certified Peer Specialist can be utilized include, but are not limited to, peer support centers, crisis stabilization units, case management, psychosocial rehabilitation, and inpatient hospital settings.

**6) What types of services can a Certified Peer Specialist provide?**

A Certified Peer Specialist may provide, but are not limited to, developing community support, assisting in the development of rehabilitation goals, serving as an advocate, life coach, mentor, or facilitator for resolution of issues a peer is unable to resolve on their own, or providing education on the importance of maintaining personal wellness and recovery.

**7) Does the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities provide employment or job placement?**

No. The Peer Specialist Certification Program is not an offer of employment or job placement by the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities.

**8) Who will supervise the Certified Peer Specialist and how?**

Each Certified Peer Specialist must be under the supervision of a mental health professional in accordance with acceptable guidelines and standards of practice as defined by the State.

**9) Where are Peer Specialist trainings offered and is a fee involved?**

For information on recognized trainings and/or facilitators, contact the TDMHDD, Office of Consumer Affairs toll-free at 1.800.560.5767 or visit the website at <http://www.state.tn.us/mental/policy/oca1.html>.

**10) How can provider agencies ensure that Certified Peer Specialist employees maintain confidentiality?**

Maintaining confidentiality and privacy of all individuals receiving services is a legitimate concern and major issue of emphasis with all employees, not just Certified Peer Specialist employees.

All employees should receive Title 33 and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) training to uphold the confidentiality and privacy of individuals receiving services. Every employee should be aware that all information regarding a person's recovery and treatment status is confidential.

**11) Are Certified Peer Specialist services a Medicaid reimbursable service?**

Yes. The requirements of the specific job duties and payor contracts will determine service reimbursement.

**12) What is the salary range for Certified Peer Specialist?**

The salary range is determined by the provider agency and program, and is affected by whether the Certified Peer Specialist works part time or full time.

**13) How may I obtain a copy of my High School or GED diploma?**

You may obtain a request form for a duplicate High School diploma or a letter verifying a GED diploma at the OCA website: <http://www.state.tn.us/mental/policy/oca1.html>.